Katerina Volioti, "Entry on: Let’s go to Nafplio [Πάμε στο Ναύπλιο; (Páme sto Náfplio?)] by Marisa De Castro", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/28. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

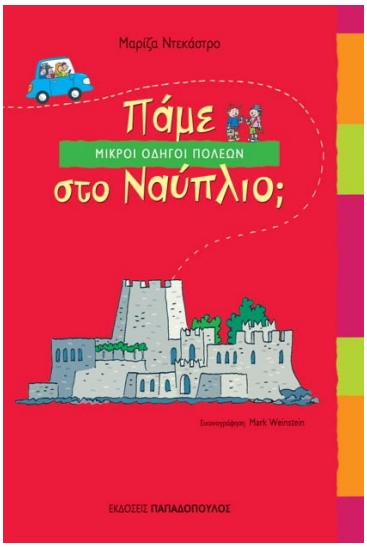
Marisa De Castro

Let’s go to Nafplio [Πάμε στο Ναύπλιο; (Páme sto Náfplio?)]

Greece (2009)

TAGS: Achilles Acrocorinth Alexander the Great Argolid Argos (City) Athena Athens Epaminondas Isthmus of Corinth Leonidas Miltiades Mycenae Nauplius Nemea Palamedes Persians Phocion Poseidon Themistocles Thermopylae Tiryns





Courtesy of the Publisher. Retrieved from epbooks.gr (accessed: July 5, 2022).

General information	
Title of the work	Let’s go to Nafplio [Πάμε στο Ναύπλιο; (Páme sto Náfplio?)]
Country of the First Edition	Greece
Country/countries of popularity	Greece
Original Language	Greek
First Edition Date	2009
First Edition Details	Μαρίζα Ντεκάστρο [Marisa De Castro], *Πάμε στο Ναύπλιο;* [Páme sto Náfplio?] (Short City Guides [Μικροί Οδηγοί Πόλεων (Mikroí Odīgoí Póleōn)]). Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2009, 32 pp.
ISBN	9789604129584
Genre	Guidebook, Picture books
Target Audience	Children (target reader: 6+)
Author of the Entry	Katerina Volioti, University of Roehampton, Katerina.Volioti@roehampton.ac.uk
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Creators



Marisa De Castro , b. 1953
(Author)

Marisa De Castro was born in Athens and was educated at the Sorbonne, Paris. De Castro, who has worked as a primary-school teacher, has written a large number of children's books, mostly about art history and archaeology.

Sources:

Profile at the epbooks.gr (accessed: July 3, 2018).

Profile at the metaixmio.gr (accessed: July 3, 2018).

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Additional information

Translation

English: *Let's Go to Nafplio*, trans. Karen Bohrer, Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2009, 32 pp.

Summary

The book starts with an illustration of a typical nuclear family in a car. The mother in the front, father at the wheel, and the daughter son at the back. The mother and son's red-blond hair could imply a family of foreign visitors to Greece, driving to Nafplio from other Greek cities. Subsequently, we see a simplified map of the Peloponnese and southern central Greece, dotted with places of interest, such as the Corinth Canal. Nemea is marked with a drawing of a man, presumably Herakles, combating a lion. Antiquities dominate visually in this map, as sketches of ruins appear for Acrocorinth, Athens, Mycenae, Tiryns and Argos.

Decastro (also De Castro) covers Nafplio's ancient Venetian, Bavarian, and Turkish heritage.

The book closes with sketch drawings and a text about Nafplio's key sights children may have seen during their visit. Places of interest include the natural environment as well, like a beautiful beach at Karathona. At the very end, the author looks beyond Nafplio, at Mycenean Tiryns, potentially pointing to a deep (and mythological) past.

The English, offered by translator Karen Bohrer, is easy to follow, making the text accessible to young children.

Analysis

In this short city guide, the author magnificently blends mythological and historical information. Also of interest is the multi-ethnic focus on cultural heritage that supplements the Greekness of mythology. Decastro is to be commended for providing context to Nafplio's sights and striking a balance between ancient and modern narratives from myth, archaeology and history. We read about Nafplio's monuments and history from its distant past, including its mythological roots, and from more recent times, given the city's role in early 19th-century

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politics.

Children and other readers come to realise that a trip to Nafplio is a journey back in time. Therefore, it comes as no surprise to read about Nafplio's mythological beginnings in the opening pages. Nafplio, we read, is named after Nauplius, who was Poseidon's and Amymone's son and "a great navigator". Decastro mentions the Great Bear and its salience in seafaring and asks children to draw Nauplius. Children may be inclined to draw an ancient-type figure and stars. Decastro appears to use a reference to Greek mythology to spark children's imagination. Perhaps more details from the myth may have been desirable. For example, we could have read that Amymone was King Danaos' daughter, for whom Poseidon produced a spring of fresh water with his trident at the spot where he met her, thus appreciating the myth's local relevance*.

General knowledge is offered here. We learn that "gods and mythical figures" gave their names to various cities, and children are encouraged to think about Athens and Alexandria(s). Athena's and Alexander's heads show their respective identifying attributes. Horns emerge from Alexander's blond and unruly hair, which is typical of his portraiture on coinage. Athena wears her helmet, as known from various media and most commonly from sculpture and vase painting. Athena's exaggerated and red-lipsticked lips could allude to modern stereotypes of female beauty, rendering Athena even more familiar to young children.

Subsequently, we read about Nafplio's Venetian castle, "the Palamidi" presumably named after Palamedes. Once again, we make a journey back in time to Palamedes from Greek mythology, who was Nauplius' son and "invented the letter Y of the alphabet". Mark Weinstein, the illustrator, has done a superb job representing the mythical invention in real life. Weinstein shows Palamedes as a sculptor (and as a generic bearded Greek) in the act of working stone into a "Y". Children are encouraged to visualise Palamedes, a mythological character who, unlike Poseidon and Athena, is little known.

The *Bastion of the Five Brothers*, located in another medieval castle, offers yet another opportunity for the author to refer to Greek antiquity, to great men from military history (Themistocles, Miltiades, Epaminondas, Phocion, and Leonidas) and mythology (Achilles). Weinstein's drawings show four bearded generals (and it may be difficult to tell who is who). By contrast, Achilles is depicted as a

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ginger-blond without a beard, who has a childish face that children are likely to identify with.

From page 14 onwards, De Castro presents Nafplio's medieval and 19th century history and architecture. In learning about urban planning, squares and key buildings, children are encouraged to compare Athens and Italian towns and consider the extended biographies of buildings. The Old Mosque, for example, served as parliament, school, jail, law court, and cultural centre before housing Nafplio's Archaeological Museum. To emphasise Nafplio's multi-ethnic heritage, to which Greek and non-Greek readers can relate, De Castro mentions the Turkish public baths and the British, French, and Russians in the Battle of Navarino. Recent archaeological scholarship has also focused on the Ottoman legacy of Greece**.

Towards the end of the book, we see Palamedes' name again since Nafplio's public library is named after him. The main purpose here is to learn about the present (i.e., what is visible and functional today) and the recent past, and about Greeks and non-Greeks. Children are asked, for example, to come up with Lord Byron's name for the *English poet who died at Messolonghi*. Children need to differentiate names from ancient and modern history in learning about key historical figures from street names.

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* For the myth, see, for example, Roussos, 1986: 128. Ρούσσος, Ε. Ν., 'Άλλα παιδιά του Ποσειδώνα', in Ι. Θ. Κακριδής (ed.) *Ελληνική Μυθολογία. Τόμος 2. Οι Θεοί*: Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 1986, 127–130.

** See for example Zarinebaf, Fariba, John Bennet and Jack L. Davis, "A Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece", in *Hesperia Supplement* 34, Athens: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2005. See ascsa.edu.gr (accessed: August 3, 2018).

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Achilles Acrocorinth Alexander the Great Argolid Argos (City) Athena Athens Epaminondas Isthmus of Corinth Leonidas Miltiades Mycenae Nauplius Nemea Palamedes Persians Phocion Poseidon Themistocles Thermopylae Tiryns

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Child, children Historical figures History Knowledge Learning Modernity Past Relationships
Further Reading	Information about the book at epbooks.gr, published in Greek 15 April 2009 (accessed: August 3, 2018).
Addenda	Entry based on: Marisa De Castro, *Let's go to Nafplio! Short City Guides*, trans. by Karen Bohrer, Athens: Papadopoulos Publishing, 2011, 32 pp.

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